

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is responsive to the Office Action dated July 22, 2004.

On information and belief, the Substitute Specification filed with the Preliminary Amendment dated April 13, 2004, contained no new matter. Entry of the Substitute Specification is therefore requested.

Claim 5 was found to recite patentable subject matter. The applicants reserve the right to rewrite claim 5 in independent form in order to obtain allowance of claim 5. However, no amendment is necessary at this time, because the independent claim, claim 1, should be allowed over the cited references.

Claims 1-4 and 6 have been rejected as being unpatentable over a combination of four references, Mori, Kuze, the IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin, and Caldwell. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The primary reference is Mori. Mori discloses several of the features recited in claim 1. However, Mori does not concern itself with measuring the density of the slurry raw material as recited e.g., at claim 1, line 11. Therefore, although Mori has a memory section, the memory section in Mori cannot store any data concerning the density of the slurry raw material as recited in claim 1, at lines 13-14. The Examiner cites Caldwell for measuring the density of a slurry raw material. However, there is no memory storing density data in Caldwell. Further, Caldwell only measures density in order to monitor "the quality of the coating on the film." In other words, Caldwell does not disclose any use of density data to control the final thickness of the sheet obtained after the slurry raw material is dried.

Therefore, Mori and Caldwell are not combinable as the Examiner has combined them. Caldwell discloses no reason to modify Mori's apparatus to measure and store density data, since Caldwell considers density merely to relate to "quality," not thickness, which is Mori's focus.

Further, even if combined, the two references would not add up to the invention of claim 1. There is no teaching in either Mori or Caldwell of how to use density data in a thickness-setting function as set forth in claim 1.

Summarizing the above, the Mori and Caldwell references cannot suggest “a memory section for storing data representative of a relation among the wet-mode measurement of the property of the slurry raw material disposed on the carrier film, the density of the slurry raw material, and the final thickness of the sheet obtained after the slurry raw material is dried,” as recited in claim 1, lines 12-15, in combination with the other features recited in claim 1.

Similarly, the cited art does not disclose the operational section of claim 1, line 16-19. Claim 1 recites that the operational section estimates a sheet thickness on the basis “the data stored in the memory section, the value of the property of the slurry raw material measured by the property measuring device, and the density of the slurry raw material.” As explained above, Mori does not concern itself with density. Only Caldwell concerns itself with density, but uses density data to monitor a quality of a coating, and fails to teach any connection between density and thickness. The rejection of claim 1 is traversed for this reason as well.

A third reason for allowance of claim 1 is that none of the references suggests “an operational section which estimates a sheet thickness ... and compares the estimated value with a target value of the sheet thickness” This feature is not even mentioned in the Office Action.

The rejection of claim 1 is therefore respectfully traversed. Allowance of claim 1 is requested.

Submitted herein are new claims 7-10. Claim 7 is related to claim 1 but recites “a memory section which stores data representative of ...,” rather than a memory section “for storing” as in claim 1. Thus claim 7 more positively claims the data storing function performed by the memory section.

Regarding claim 6, the Examiner says merely that a raw data calculating means obtained by combining the four references “would be capable of performing the claimed method limitations,” namely the specific formula detailed in claim 6. The Examiner’s analysis of the claim is incorrect. Claim 6 recites specifically what the operational section does, not merely what the Examiner vaguely defined combination device might be “capable of” doing. Nothing in any of the references suggests anything corresponding to the claimed operational section, which actually does carry out the calculation specified in claim 6. The Examiner’s analysis therefore fails to present a prima facie basis for the rejection. This claim should be allowed.

New dependent claims 8-10 recite that the “predetermined property” that is measured (see claims 1 and 7) is an “area-weight” of the slurry raw material. See paragraph [0026].

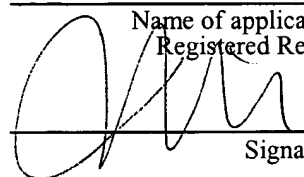
Allowance of these claims is requested as well.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, allowance of claims 1-10 is requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on October 7, 2004:

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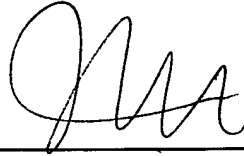


Signature

October 7, 2004

Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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